

Frontend with JavaScript

Making Requests from HTML Pages to PHP APIs

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How a Web Page Loads

[HTML + JavaScript] (Frontend) ↔ HTTP Requests ↔ [PHP Server] (Backend)

- User requests a page in a **browser**
 - We can use `cURL` to make the request.
- **Web server** (Apache/Nginx) routes `request` to **PHP**
 - In our examples, we haven't used web servers, but we have used `PHP -S` to the local web server.
- In the server, PHP processes and `responses` (returns) **HTML, CSS, JS, or JSON**
- **Browser** renders the page
- After load, user interacts with **front end (JavaScript)**

Frontend & Backend Interaction

- The **frontend (JavaScript)** can send extra requests (AJAX, Fetch API) for APIs or dynamic content.
- The same **PHP backend** or other API endpoints handle these requests.

Web Application Frontend Tools We'll Use:

- HTML for structure
- CSS for styling
- JavaScript for API communication
- Fetch API for HTTP requests

What We're Building for Web Applications

Frontend (Server)

1. **HTML Page:** User interface with buttons and forms
2. **JavaScript:** Makes HTTP requests to your PHP API

Backend (Server)

3. **PHP API:** Processes requests and responses (returns JSON).

Example: Communication between Frontend and Backend

Frontend (`test.html`) \leftrightarrow Backend (`index.php`)

How to run this example:

1. Start the PHP server

```
php -S localhost:8000
```

2. Open a web browser, and access the server.

<http://localhost:8000/test.html>

- The test.html is downloaded to the local (client side) web browser.
- The web browser parses the HTML file and runs the JavaScript code.

3. JavaScript has the code to make requests to server

```
fetch( '/index.php/api' )
```

- The JavaScript code makes requests (GET /index.php/api) to the server where it is downloaded from (<http://localhost:8000>).

4. We can directly make GET request to the server by accessing the endpoint (index.php/api) with a query string (a=b&c=d) without using HTML/JavaScript.

<http://localhost:8000/index.php/api?a=b&c=d>

We can use a web browser, or we can use cURL to make the request.

```
curl http://localhost:8000/index.php/api
```

Backend Code: index.php

Server/Backend (PHP) extracts the API information (api) from the GET request.

```
// Get the request path and clean it up
$path = $_SERVER['REQUEST_URI']; // '/index.php/api?a=b&c=d'
// remove ?a=b&c=d
$path = parse_url($path, PHP_URL_PATH); // '/index.php/api'
$path = trim($path, '/'); // 'index.php/api'

// Remove index.php from path if present
if (strpos($path, 'index.php') === 0) { // true as path has index.php
    $path = substr($path, 9); // '/api'
    $path = trim($path, '/'); // 'api'
}
```

- The parsing code is complicated because there is `index.php` in the URI string.
- We need to use `strpos` PHP function to find the `index.php` (return 0 means find the string).
- Then remove 9 characters (the length of `index.php`).
- Finally, remove `'/'` to get the final endpoint.

Making a Response

- In this example, the PHP server returns JSON as a response.
- We need the header, code, and JSON body.

```
function sendJson(array $payload, int $code = 200): void {  
    http_response_code($code);  
    header('Content-Type: application/json');  
    echo json_encode($payload, JSON_PRETTY_PRINT | JSON_UNESCAPED_SLASHES);  
    exit;  
}
```

- By default, `json_encode()` in PHP will escape forward slashes (/) into `\/`.
- It's valid JSON either way, but can look strange in URLs.
- The `JSON_UNESCAPED_SLASHES` prevents it

The sendResponse uses the sendJson function to make response.

```
function sendResponse($data, string $message = 'Success', int $code = 200): void {  
    $count = is_countable($data) ? count($data) : 1;  
    sendJson([  
        'success' => true,  
        'message' => $message,  
        'data'     => $data,  
        'count'    => $count,  
    ], $code);  
}
```

Making an Error Response (400)

- Following the web protocol, we send a 400 error when an error occurs.

```
function sendError(string $message, int $code = 400): void {  
    sendJson([  
        'success' => false,  
        'message' => $message,  
        'data'    => null,  
    ], $code);  
}
```

Routing the \$path to handle the API

- In this example, we handle only the `api` API.

```
switch ($path) {  
    case 'api':  
        // API information endpoint  
        $info = [  
            'name' => 'Simple Student Management API',  
            'version' => '1.0',  
            'description' => 'A minimal API for learning PHP basics with student data',  
            'endpoints' => [  
                'GET /api' => 'Show this API information',  
            ]  
        ];  
        sendResponse($info, 'Welcome to Simple Student Management API');  
        break;  
    default:  
        sendError('Endpoint not found', 404);  
        break;  
}  
?>
```

Frontend Code: test.html

- To access the API, we need to make a request.
 - Run PHP server with `<PHP -S localhost:8000>`
 - <http://localhost:8000/index.php/api>
- This is a response from the server.

```
{
  "success": true,
  "message": "Welcome to Simple Student Management API",
  "data": {
    "name": "Simple Student Management API",
    "version": "1.0",
    "description": "A minimal API for learning PHP basics with student data",
    "endpoints": {
      "GET \"/api": "Show this API information"
    }
  },
  "count": 4
}
```


HTML/JavaScript

- We need to get the response using HTML/JavaScript.

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<head> ... </head>
<body>
  <div class="container">
    <button onclick="getApiInfo()">Get API Information</button>
  </div>
  <script>
    const API_BASE = '/index.php';
    // Function to make API calls
    async function apiCall(endpoint) {
      ...
    }
    function getApiInfo() {
      apiCall('/api');
    }
  </script>
</body>
</html>
```

JavaScript: The Communication Layer

- We use the fetch JavaScript API to make a request.

```
// Simple GET request
fetch('/index.php/api')
  .then(response => response.json())
  .then(data => console.log(data))
  .catch(error => console.error('Error:', error));
```

- response has the HTTP-level object (status, headers, body stream).

```
HTTP/1.1 200 OK  
Content-Type: application/json  
Content-Length: 234
```

```
{"message":"...", "data":{"name": ..., "endpoints":{"GET /api":"Show this API information"}}}
```

- data = actual parsed JSON object from the body.

```
{"message":"...", "data":{"name": ..., "endpoints":{"GET /api":"Show this API information"}}}
```

- We can use async/await to get the same results (preferred)

```
async function getApiInfo() {  
  try {  
    const response = await fetch('/index.php/api');  
    const data = await response.json();  
    console.log(data);  
  } catch (error) {  
    console.error('Error:', error);  
  }  
}
```

Why async/await? Cleaner, easier to read, better error handling

Displaying the response from servers

```
<div id="result" class="result">  
  Click any button above to test the API...  
</div>
```

We can use JavaScript to update the information in the `<div>` block using id.

```
document.getElementById('result').cextContent =  
  JSON.stringify(data, null, 2);
```

We get the JSON content from `response.json()` and then we update the HTML.

```
// Base URL for our PHP API
const API_BASE = '/index.php';

// Function to make API calls
async function apiCall(endpoint) {
  try {
    // Make the request
    const response = await fetch(API_BASE + endpoint);
    const data = await response.json();

    // Display the result
    document.getElementById('result').textContent =
      JSON.stringify(data, null, 2);

  } catch (error) {
    console.error('Error:', error);
  }
}
```

- We make the api GET request using this `getApiInfo()` JavaScript function.

```
function getApiInfo() {  
    apiCall('/api'); // Calls our API at /index.php/  
}
```

Button Click Handlers

- HTML Button

```
<button onclick="getApiInfo()">Get API Information</button>
```

- JavaScript Handler

```
function getApiInfo() {  
    apiCall('/api'); // Calls our API at /index.php/  
}
```


What Happens

1. User clicks the button
2. `getApiInfo()` function runs
3. `apiCall('/api')` makes an HTTP request to `/index.php/api`
4. PHP processes the request and returns JSON
5. JavaScript receives the response and updates the page

Different Types of Requests

- We can make other types of requests using JavaScript.
 - We should make corresponding API handlers on the PHP side.

- GET Request (Default)

```
const response = await fetch('/api/users');
```

- POST Request (JSON)

```
const response = await fetch('/api/users', {  
  method: 'POST',  
  headers: {  
    'Content-Type': 'application/json'  
  },  
  body: JSON.stringify({  
    name: 'John Doe',  
    email: 'john@example.com'  
  })  
});
```

- PUT Request (JSON)

```
const response = await fetch('/api/users/123', {  
  method: 'PUT',  
  headers: {  
    'Content-Type': 'application/json'  
  },  
  body: JSON.stringify({  
    name: 'John Smith'  
  })  
});
```

Error Handling Best Practices

- Check Response Status

```
async function apiCall(endpoint) {  
  try {  
    const response = await fetch(API_BASE + endpoint);  
  
    // Check if request was successful  
    if (!response.ok) {  
      throw new Error(`HTTP error! status: ${response.status}`);  
    }  
  
    const data = await response.json();  
    return data;  
  } catch (error) {  
    console.error('API call failed:', error);  
    throw error; // Re-throw for caller to handle  
  }  
}
```

Handle Different Error Types

```
try {  
  const data = await apiCall('/api/users');  
  // Success handling  
} catch (error) {  
  if (error.name === 'TypeError') {  
    // Network error  
    showError('Network error. Please check your connection.');  } else {  
    // Server error  
    showError(`Server error: ${error.message}`);  
  }  
}
```

Updating the DOM with Results

- We already discussed that we can access an HTML block with `id` using `document.getElementById`.
- We can update the content by modifying the `textContent`.

```
document.getElementById('result').textContent = 'Hello World';
```


- CSS/HTML

```
<style>
  #result {
    background: #f5f5f5; padding: 1em; border: 1px solid #ccc;
    font-family: monospace; white-space: pre-wrap; word-break: break-word;
  }
</style>
```

```
<div id="result" class="result">
  Click any button above to test the API...
</div>
```

- HTML Update from the PHP server

```
const response = await fetch(API_BASE + endpoint);  
const data = await response.json();  
// Display the result  
document.getElementById('result').textContent =  
    JSON.stringify(data, null, 2);
```

Key Takeaways

- Frontend-Backend Communication:
 1. **HTML** provides the user interface structure
 2. **JavaScript** handles API communication and DOM updates
 3. **Fetch API** makes modern HTTP requests easy
 4. **async/await** provides clean asynchronous code
 5. **Error handling** is crucial for a good user experience

Best Practices

- Always handle errors gracefully
- Provide user feedback (loading states)
- Use browser developer tools for debugging
- Keep API calls focused and straightforward